

Attendance policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We have high expectations of our students and this includes their need to attend school for the maximum amount of sessions.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8:35 and will be kept open until 9:30. The register for the second session will be taken at 11:50 and will be kept open until 12:20

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). This needs to be done via telephoning the school office on 01422 360 272. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). This should occur on every day the child is absent. If a parent wishes a student to leave school before the end of the school day unexpectedly they must be collected by a parent. If that is impossible we must receive written consent (email is satisfactory) giving consent and detailing how that student will get home before we allow that child to leave our duty of care.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Including registering for the morning session and then attending their appointment before returning to school where possible.

A parent should email their child's Pastoral Leader concerning advance appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance and via writing to the Head Teacher. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. (L)

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. (U)

If a student is late to school (unless it is an exceptional circumstance) they will be given a same day 20 minute standards detention, persistent lateness may lead to further sanctions such as a school detention and also a meeting with a Pastoral Leader to offer support.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance % in conjunction with their progress reports.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

All periods of absence, whether subsequently authorised or unauthorised should be notified to the school in writing or by email. If a period of absence can be foreseen,

parent(s)/carer(s) should apply for leave of absence in advance by putting the request in writing/email to either the Achievement Leader for up to 2 days, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually (over 3 days), taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Approved sporting events. **Examples of authorised absence**

- Religious observation days. The school allows a maximum of 2 days
- Wedding of a close family member
- Sickness
- Hospital/medical appointments – these must be supported by production of an appointment card/letter
- Visits to University either to attend an open day or for interview, or a career related interview with prior approval from the Assistant Head (Post 16) and subject staff
- Attendance at courses / events organised by school / college / other providers
- Work experience placement which is an integral part of a course and for which the student does not receive a wage
- Bereavement leave
- Severe disruption to a student's mode of transport, for example a breakdown in public transport
- Driving test and written exam with evidence

Examples of unauthorised absence

- Family holidays in term time
- Visiting sick relatives for more than two days.
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting for younger siblings
- Part or full time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Driving lessons
- Hair and beauty appointments

3.7 Social times (Break and Lunch)

We expect all pupils to remain on school grounds during break and lunchtime unless they have authorised reason to leave school confirmed in writing by the parent. We would

expect the child to be collected/returned to school by the parent/carer. Where this is not possible, the school would require written consent (email is acceptable) from the parent/carers giving consent and detailing how that pupils will get to their destination before we allow that child to leave our duty of care. Pupils are not allowed to go home for lunch expect under exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement with the student's Progress Leader.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote positive attendance via Assemblies and Tutorials. We award Merits for attendance to school and also celebrate 100% attendance at the end of year award assembly

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents may be written to if their child is or is at risk of becoming a 'Persistent Absentee'. Local Authority support may be sought if a child's attendance does not improve after intervention.

Progress Leaders will review attendance on a weekly basis and set interventions plans on a Half Termly basis. Pastoral Leaders will support via practical interventions.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Subject Teachers/Form teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/Reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head Pastoral and Behaviour. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday

		due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national

		emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

- Exceptional circumstances are the judgement of the headteacher.